Conference on Disarmament

16 August 2018

Original: English

Note verbale dated 2 August 2018 from the Delegation of the United States of America to the Conference on Disarmament addressed to the Secretary-General of the Conference transmitting the United States response to CD/2042 (14 September 2015), titled "Letter dated 11 September 2015 from the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the Conference on Disarmament and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Russian Federation regarding the United States of America analysis of the 2014 updated Russian and Chinese texts of the draft treaty on prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against outer space objects (PPWT)"

The Delegation of the United States of America to the Conference on Disarmament presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and has the honour of transmitting to the Secretariat a text containing the U.S. response to the letter of September 11, 2015, from China and Russia regarding the analysis by the United States of America of the draft "treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (PPWT) (CD/2042). The United States Delegation would appreciate the Secretariat's assistance in issuing and circulating this text as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

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Response by the United States of America to "Follow-up comments by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the analysis submitted by the United States of America of the updated Russian-Chinese draft PPWT" (CD/2042)

Executive Summary

1. This document provides further analysis by the United States of CD/2042 (14 September 2015) submitted by the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China pertaining to the updated draft, "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects" (PPWT), in light of the United States National Security Strategy published in December 2017 and the recently completed United States National Space Strategy. CD/2042 was submitted in response to questions raised by the United States in CD/1998 (3 September 2014).

2. The United States reiterates its view that the 12 June 2014, updated draft PPWT (CD/1985) is fundamentally flawed. This is essentially the same proposal that has been presented to the Conference on Disarmament since 1982. Russia and China assert in conclusory fashion that the draft PPWT "is currently the most effective and feasible way of preventing armed conflict in outer space," yet provide no support for this proposition and ignore a number of fundamental, inherent problems with the proposal that are discussed in detail in this submission. CD/2042 does not satisfactorily address the many critical deficiencies in the draft PPWT that were previously raised regarding the scope of the proposal and its lack of an integral, legally binding verification regime.

3. This United States response to CD/2042 makes two key points: (1) it is not possible to craft an acceptable definition of a "weapon in outer space"; and (2) no space arms control treaty can be verified because most space systems are dual-use and on-orbit inspections for verification purposes are not feasible. Additionally, although Russia and China state that they "clearly cannot agree with the assertion by the United States of America position that 'Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter already prohibits the use of force or the threat of force against another State's outer space objects'" (CD/2042, paragraph 8), the United States again reiterates its view that existing international legal obligations, as reflected in the United Nations Charter, prohibit the use of force or the threat of force against another State's outer space objects, subject to the exceptions of the use of force in self-defence and as authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

4. Although the United States would prefer that the space domain remain free of conflict, we are preparing for and will continue to ensure that we are ready to meet and overcome any challenges that may arise. As the United States National Security Strategy and the United States National Space Strategy make clear, the return of great power competition is increasingly a major factor in shaping United States national space policy and strategy. At the same time that Russia and China are publicly and diplomatically promoting the non-weaponization of space and a political commitment of "no first placement" (NFP) of weapons in space, they remain committed to pursuing destructive anti-satellite weapons and space warfare capabilities. In contrast, a key part of the United States approach to international engagement in the matter has been to seek to ensure that all actors in space conduct safe and responsible operations in outer space through the implementation of pragmatic and voluntary bilateral and multilateral "best practice" guidelines, transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs), and norms of behaviour.

5. The consensus recommendations of the 2013 United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189, 29 July 2013) continue to offer a solid starting point for discussions on addressing challenges to space security and sustainability. The United States encourages those States that have not fully implemented these recommendations to do so to the greatest extent practicable, rather than focusing attention on a proposed legally binding agreement that would not promote greater security for the outer space environment

and the activities that depend on it. The United States has submitted its views (in CD/2078, 16 September 2016) on implementing the GGE's recommendations to the Conference on Disarmament as a contribution to the CD's discussion of the GGE report.

I. Definitions

6. First, the United States agrees with the notion that, in general, definitions can be considered a key element of an effective and verifiable arms control agreement, but, given the dual-use nature of some space systems, it is not possible to craft a definition of a "weapon in outer space" that would satisfy everyone's concerns and not unduly or unfairly constrain civil or commercial space activities. The United States notes that the proliferation of new kinds of constellations and space-based services compounds the challenge of verification and highlights this fundamental flaw in the PPWT proposal. Many of the capabilities emerging in today's space revolution, such as on-orbit servicing systems and active debris removal systems, provide excellent examples of systems that have legitimate, beneficial uses, but that are also inherently capable of being used to interfere with or disrupt other operators' space systems. In contrast, CD/2042's discussion of the "scope" of the updated draft PPWT raises more questions than it answers. The draft PPWT defines a "weapon in outer space" as "any outer space object or component thereof which has been produced or converted to destroy, damage or disrupt." It would be difficult, if not impossible, to draw a distinction between permissible and impermissible space objects under the definition of a "weapon in outer space" based on the draft PPWT. Any definition of a "weapon in space" intended to be unambiguous could either be so detailed that it becomes too complicated to apply effectively, or so vague that it invites exploitation, treaty violations and a deliberate weakening of the agreement. Additionally, without reliable, concrete and effective verification provisions, it would be impossible to determine whether a system has been "produced or converted to destroy, damage or disrupt." Such assessments would largely come down to arguments about intent that are difficult to prove or disprove and that would likely be a source of tension, mistrust, and miscalculation, rather than an "effective and feasible way of preventing armed conflict in outer space" as CD/2042 states.

II. Verification

7. A review of CD/2042 reveals that Russia and China again failed to address the fundamental requirement for an integral verification regime. The United States position remains clear: it cannot support an approach to outer space security in which key legally binding provisions required for effective verification would only be determined through subsequent negotiations "of an additional protocol." Rather than addressing this requirement directly, CD/2042 unconvincingly attempts to rely on two inappropriate examples of legal instruments, particularly the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (i.e., Outer Space Treaty or OST) and the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and on Their Destruction (i.e., Biological Weapons Convention or BWC), as justification for the absence of a verification mechanism in the updated PPWT. Regarding the reference to the BWC, the United States maintains that, as a general matter, it is not useful to extrapolate between vastly different topics; rather, the United States believes that a convention or proposal should be considered on its own merits.

8. In their 2006 Working Paper titled "Verification Aspects of PAROS" (CD/1781), Russia and China argue: "Technically, outer space verification measures would involve such cutting-edge technologies as survey, tracking, and spotting. There are not yet adequate technological conditions at the moment to make an effective verification regime possible." And in their 2009 document, "Principal questions and comments on the draft Treaty on Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space and of the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects (PPWT)" (CD/1872), Russia and China again acknowledged this reality, stating that: "it would seem appropriate to set aside the question

of verification and other contentious issues for the time being. In the future, as science and technology progress and when the conditions are right, the addition of a verification protocol to PPWT may be considered." However, if key legally binding provisions required for effective verification are left for subsequent negotiation, and the treaty's emphasis is on prohibiting certain actions rather than weapons development (thus potentially allowing the development of a weapons break-out capability), there may be greater incentive, not less, to develop, build, and possibly deploy space weapons prior to the establishment of an effective verification regime. Failure to include provisions for effective verification could also lessen the motivation to ultimately establish such a verification regime, as the political benefit of getting the PPWT regime in place would have been achieved and the potential costs of an effective verification regime would have been avoided. So not only would there be incentive to develop such weapons before an effective verification regime is developed, but there may also be an incentive to delay, slow, or prevent the conclusion of such a protocol.

9. Russia and China have suggested that the simple normative value of an agreement like the draft PPWT would be incentive enough to enter into such an agreement, whether or not a means of effective verification is included in the agreement. This assumes that all agreements have positive value. The United States disagrees with this view. Absent an available mechanism for effective verification, which in the case of the PPWT is unachievable in the United States view, such an agreement would provide States Parties political cover to claim they are compliant with the legal obligations under the treaty even if they knowingly engage in activities that would violate those obligations because there would be no means to verify their compliance.

10. Additionally, Russia has argued that a political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space is sufficient to prevent an arms race in outer space. The NFP initiative contains no features that would make it possible to effectively confirm a State's political commitment "not to be the first to place weapons in outer space," nor does it meet the criteria for TCBMs established in the 2013 consensus report of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189, 29 July 2013).

11. Regarding the OST, prior to ratifying the treaty, the United States assessed that verification of the treaty's ban on the placement of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in outer space was possible. The United States had confidence at that time that, given the challenges that would have occurred regarding the deployment and maintenance of weapons of mass destruction on orbit and through the use of United States national capabilities, the OST was verifiable. Moreover, the United States assessed that no potential adversary would gain strategic advantage by placing WMD in outer space given other, more cost-effective, reliable, and timely means of basing and delivering such weapons. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the OST serves as a cornerstone of the international legal framework in outer space. Virtually all space-faring States are party to it, and it establishes certain critical legal concepts, including: that the exploration and use of outer space "shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all countries"; and that international legal obligations, including the Charter of the United Nations, apply in outer space to the same extent they apply elsewhere. Accordingly, unlike the proposed PPWT, the OST is not strictly considered an arms control treaty, and efforts to draw a false equivalency between the two are misguided and diminish the broad utility of the OST.

III. The Use of Force in Space

12. In CD/2042, Russia and China state they "clearly cannot agree with the assertion by the United States of America that 'Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter already prohibits the use of force or the threat of force against another State's outer space objects.'" In other words, Russia and China suggest in CD/2042 that Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, and its prohibition of the use of force, may not apply in outer space.

13. The United States reiterates its view that existing international legal obligations, as reflected in Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, prohibit the use of force or the threat

of force against another State's outer space objects, subject to the exceptions on the use of force in self-defence and as authorized by the United Nations Security Council under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Article III of the Outer Space Treaty (OST) expressly extends the application of international legal obligations, including the United Nations Charter, to activities in outer space. Consistent with Article III of the OST, the use of force by States in outer space is governed by the same established, long-standing rules of international legal obligations that apply to States' use of force on land, in the air, and at sea – that is, by the United Nations Charter, including Articles 2(4) and 51, as well as by customary legal obligations on the use of force. This includes the rules governing the use of force in the exercise of the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence in response to an armed attack, including the requirement that any use of force in self-defence must be limited to what is necessary and proportionate to address the imminent or actual armed attack.

14. In CD/2042, Russia and China assert that because the United Nations Charter "was drafted before the space age had begun," and that, therefore, "the unqualified and direct application of the provisions of the Charter to such a sensitive area of international relations as outer space development requires further elaboration and clarification through negotiation between States." The United Nations Charter, however, was drafted to meet the needs of all ages to come, and its provisions are not specific to particular domains or technologies.

15. CD/2042 also seizes on the fact that the phrase "use of force" is not explicitly defined under existing legally binding agreements to argue that this somehow means, absent further "clarification" or "elaboration," that existing international legal obligations on the use of force does not apply to outer space. By the same logic, however, Russia and China must equally reject the application of existing international legal obligations on the use of force to States' use of force on land, in the air, and at sea. That they do not belies the assertion that Article 2(4) does not apply to outer space. As a general matter, States have not sought to define precisely (or state conclusively) what situations would constitute a "use of force" (or an "armed attack") in other domains, and there is no reason that outer space should be different.

16. The United States does not agree with the suggestion in CD/2042 that there is a "gap" in existing legally binding agreements that needs to be filled by a new treaty-based ban on the use of force or threat of force in outer space. As noted, existing international legal obligations on the use of force – including Articles 2(4) and 51 of the United Nations Charter and customary legal obligations – currently and adequately addresses this issue, and as stated in CD/1998 on the draft PPWT, the United States would not support any attempt to define the concept of "use of force" or "threat of force" for purposes of such a treaty.

IV. The Contributions of "Best Practice" Guidelines and TCBMs to Strengthening Safety, Stability, and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities

17. The United States strongly supports the pursuit of voluntary bilateral and multilateral "best practice" guidelines and TCBMs as prudent ways to strengthen the safety, stability, and sustainability of outer space activities. TCBMs, such as releasing information about national space policies and strategies – suggested by Russia and China to be included as "preventive" verification measures – are already being done routinely by the United States and others in the interest of transparency. Such actions were recommended as voluntary TCBMs by the 2013 GGE on TCBMs in Outer Space Activities and are taken independently of any legally binding treaty proposals such as the updated PPWT. Although such TCBMs could enhance stability and prevent misperceptions, they could not fully substitute or solely serve as an effective verification regime in deterring violations and ensuring confidence in compliance in this realm.

18. The United States pursuit of voluntary "best practice" guidelines and TCBMs should be viewed as a call for crafting bilateral and multilateral arrangements that best achieve the desired cooperative outcome to address immediate concerns. Rather than focusing

international efforts towards protracted negotiations to conclude and ratify a legally binding instrument, the United States is convinced that many outer space challenges confronting the international community today could be addressed in the near-term through a collective use of voluntary measures such as guidelines, non-legally binding TCBMs, and, eventually, norms of safe and responsible behavior for the long-term sustainability and stability of outer space activities. Such voluntary measures would reinforce and supplement the existing international legal regime for outer space activities and contribute to building trust and confidence among nations in outer space. TCBMs work best because they can be constructed more quickly, yield timely results that benefit the outer space environment, and capitalize upon the shared interests of all space operators. The United States thus urges further international progress in implementing the consensus recommendations of the 2013 GGE report on outer space TCBMs.

V. Conclusion

19. The United States has carefully analysed and assessed the 2008 and 2014 versions of the draft PPWT in great detail and with due consideration. The United States also has thoroughly studied the supplemental justification in CD/2042. By every measure, the United States has concluded that the updated draft PPWT remains a fundamentally flawed proposal. The proposed PPWT does not meet the United States criteria for an acceptable arms control measure.

20. The United States National Space Strategy calls for protecting our vital interests in space and strengthening the safety, stability, and sustainability of our space activities in order to advance United States security, economic prosperity, and scientific knowledge. Our national security posture focuses on identifying the policies, strategies, and capabilities needed to protect and defend the United States, our allies, and our partners, while continuing to uphold the free use and access to space. To address these changes, rather than pursuing "top down" treaty negotiations, we advocate pursuing proven, technically derived approaches with national and private sector space operators to define "best practices" that could be developed into non-binding voluntary guidelines. As such guidelines become internationally accepted, nations, including the United States, could choose to incorporate appropriate guidelines into national policy, law, and regulation. A legally binding instrument such as the flawed draft PPWT would not be credible or effective and should not be pursued.

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

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Note verbale dated 3 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 General Statement.

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

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General Statement of the Group of 21 (G-21)

1. The Group of 21 would like to stress, once again, that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum mandated by the First Special Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSODI) and emphasize the importance of preserving it by strengthening the nature, role and mandate of this body. We must underscore the need to redouble our efforts in order to reinforce and revitalize the CD and preserve its credibility through the resumption of substantive work including, inter alia, the negotiations on nuclear disarmament. The G-21 reaffirms its working paper on nuclear disarmament contained in document CD/2099, and all the other working papers submitted to the Conference on 2017.

2. Nuclear disarmament continues to be the highest priority of the international community. The G-21 reiterates its deep concern at the danger posed to the survival of humankind by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and of their possible use or threat of use. The Group, stressing its strong commitment to nuclear disarmament, underscores the urgent need to commence negotiations on this issue in the CD, without further delay. As the highest priority, the CD should start negotiations on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of nuclear weapons, leading to the global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time. In this context, the Group recalls its working paper contained in CD/2063 that calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

3. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations as "Zones of Peace" in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and highlights its character of first ever Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico, in the framework of the 25th Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

4. The group also welcomes the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed in Cairo, Egypt, in 1996. The Treaty, which came into effect on 15th July, 2009, seeks to prevent the stationing of nuclear explosives devices,

prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons, and the dumping of radioactive waste on the continent. For the purpose of ensuring compliance with the obligations under the treaty, the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) was established.

5. The Group reaffirms the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in these areas. The Group welcomes the convening of the high level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013 and reaffirms its related resolution A/RES/72/251 to follow up to this meeting. As the former Secretary General of the UN rightly mentioned in the CD in 2015 "The High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority and deserves attention at the highest levels". In this vein, the Group fully supports the goals of this resolution in particular its call for urgent decision by the CD to commence negotiation on nuclear disarmament, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction. The G-21 will make a separate statement in the CD Plenary on this issue. The Group also welcomes the decision to convene, in New York no later than 2018, a UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard. The Group welcomes with appreciation the establishment of September 26 as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, and the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly organized every year to commemorate and promote this International Day, highlighting the events around the world in commemoration of this day, and calls on governments, parliaments and civil society to take further action annually to commemorate the day.

6. The Group reaffirms the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery. It notes the report of the Open-Ended Working Group mandated by the UN General Assembly "to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons" and hopes that it would contribute towards negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD, particularly a comprehensive Convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

7. The Group takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, pursuant to UNGA resolution 71/258 held in New York from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017.

8. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of such weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons as a matter of high priority. The Group expresses concern that despite the commitment of the nuclear weapon States (NWS) and long standing requests by NNWS to receive such legally binding assurances, no tangible progress has been achieved in this regard. It is a matter of more concern that NNWS implicitly or explicitly have been subject to nuclear threats by some nuclear weapon States contrary to their obligations under the UN Charter. The Group also calls for the commencement of negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances in accordance with UNGA resolution A/RES/72/59.

9. The Group concurs with the former UN Secretary General by delivering the statement on 23 May 2015 that there is a growing understanding of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and in this regard welcomes the

hosting of the Conferences on this subject, convened in Oslo on 4-5 March 2013, in Mexico on 13-14 February and in Vienna on 8-9 December 2014.

10. In this context, the Group expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate, and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and its long term catastrophic consequences on human health, environment, and other vital economic resources, thus endangering the life of present and future generations. The Group believes that the full realization of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches, efforts and international commitments towards nuclear disarmament, through an inclusive process involving all States.

11. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) welcome the spirit of the findings of the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. We call on all nuclear weapon states parties to the NPT to implement their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all states parties are committed to under Article VI. Given the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and unacceptable risks and threats associated with a nuclear weapons detonation, we will endeavor to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In this regard, we note the relevant resolutions adopted by the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly.

12. The G-21 expresses its disappointment that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to undertake substantive work on its agenda. The Group takes note of various efforts to reach consensus on the CD's Programme of Work and all subsequent decisions, efforts and proposals towards this end.

13. The Group welcomes the decision adopted by the CD on 16 February 2018 under Sri Lanka's presidency to establish, in accordance with Paragraph 23 of its rules of procedure, subsidiary bodies on agenda items 1 (one) to 4 (four), and one on agenda items 5 (five), 6 (six) and 7 (seven), which could also consider emerging and other issues relevant to substantive work of the Conference.

14. The Group reiterates the urgency for the CD to execute its mandate as set out by SSOD1 and also to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive Programme of Work on the basis of its agenda, while taking into account the security interests of all States and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, including nuclear disarmament, in accordance with the rules of procedure, including the rule of consensus. The Group encourages you, Mr. President, to spare no efforts and to continue wide consultations with all delegations to the CD to achieve this goal.

15. The Group furthermore believes that promoting the work of the UN disarmament machinery hinges on the need to exercising political will, taking into account the collective security interests of all States.

16. While expressing its deep concern over the persistent lack of consensus on the implementation of the multilateral disarmament agenda in the UN disarmament machinery, particularly in fulfilling the commitments on nuclear disarmament as the highest priority, the Group reaffirms its support for an early convening of the Fourth Special Session of the UN General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-IV) and expresses its deep concern over the fact that SSOD IV is yet to be convened. The Group welcomes the successful outcome of the Open-Ended Working Group, convened by resolution 65/66 of the General Assembly and its decision 70/551, which held its substantive sessions in 2016 and 2017, under the able Chairmanship of Ecuador, adopting by consensus, recommendations for objectives and agenda for SSOD-IV, which reaffirmed the importance of the existing United Nations disarmament machinery, while considering ways to strengthen it and improve its effectiveness. The Group welcomes the endorsement by the UN General Assembly of the report of the Open-Ended Working Group and the substantive recommendations contained therein.

17. The Group of 21 reiterates the importance of the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, and deeply regrets the delay of concrete actions to that end.

18. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their disappointment and deep concern that three States Parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary and co-sponsors States of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference Resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth NPT Review Conference (NPT RevCon) including the process to establish a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, as contained in the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening the NPT regime as a whole. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm that the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 Resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, and in accordance with Para 6 of this Resolution, 'Call upon all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction,' and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the Resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 Resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant NPT Review Conferences, erodes the credibility of the NPT and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT reaffirm the urgency of Israel's accession to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards. While the lack of agreement on an outcome document could undermine the NPT regime, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the NPT emphasize the continued validity of the commitments made in 1995, 2000 and 2010, particularly the unequivocal undertaking towards nuclear disarmament, and calls for their full implementation without further delay.

19. The Group recognizes the importance of continuing consultations on the question of the possibility of expansion of the membership of the CD.

20. The Group emphasizes the urgent need to address the prevalent dichotomy between the lack of progress in disarmament and increasing emphasis and efforts on non-proliferation. The Group calls upon all Member States to manifest their support for, and investment in, disarmament and non-proliferation education in a balance and comprehensive manner through training and fellowship provided by the UN, as a priority.

21. The Group also recognizes the importance of enhancing engagement between civil society and the Conference on Disarmament, according to decisions taken by the Conference, and continues to support the strengthening of the CD's interaction with civil society. In this regard, the Group welcomes the convening of the CD - Civil Society Forum on 19 March 2015 and the Second Informal Civil Society Forum on 22 June 2016.

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

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Note verbale dated 3 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on Negative Security Assurances (NSAs).

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

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Negative Security Assurances

1. The Group of 21 reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. The Group remains convinced that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their use and proliferation persists. Therefore, as reflected in the Group's statement delivered by Venezuela on June 12, 2018, the CD should start negotiations on a phased program for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, including a nuclear-weapons convention prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer and use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as mandated by the General Assembly of United Nations on its resolution 68/32, leading to agreement on a global, non-discriminatory and verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, with a specified framework of time.

2. Pending the achievement of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, the Group reaffirms the urgent need to reach an early agreement on a universal, unconditional, irrevocable and legally-binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under all circumstances, as a high priority, as called for in UN General Assembly resolution 72/25. Such an instrument should be clear, credible, without any ambiguity, non-discriminatory and should respond to the concerns of all the parties. The Group stresses in particular that the negative security assurances provided under a legally-binding instrument should be without any conditions.

3. The Group reaffirms the right of non-nuclear-weapon States not to be attacked by or threatened by the nuclear-weapons States (NWS) with the use of nuclear weapons and strongly calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to refrain from any such action or threat, whether implicit or explicit.

4. The Group underlines the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

5. The Group recalls the convening of the high level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September 2013, which demonstrated that this issue remains a major international priority, and supports and calls for the full implementation of its related resolutions 68/32, 69/58, 70/34, 71/71 and 72/251 to follow up to this meeting. The Group also highlights the importance of the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons devoted to furthering this objective, and welcomes the decision to convene, no later than 2018, a UN high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament.

6. The Group highlights the objectives laid down in resolution 72/48 of the General Assembly entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation", which, among other things, reaffirms multilateralism as the core principle in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns.

7. The Group underscores the need to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in strategic defence doctrines, security policies and military strategies, which not only set out rationales for the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, but also maintain unjustifiable concepts on international security based on promoting and developing military alliance's nuclear deterrence policies.

8. The Group believes that, pending the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, taking into account provisions of the First Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations devoted to disarmament

(SSOD I), is a positive step and important measure towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, the Group welcomes the nuclear weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok, Pelindaba, Semipalatinsk and Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free-status. The Group of 21 welcomes the resolution 69/66 of the General Assembly of the United Nations which decided to convene the Third Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia as a one-day Conference in New York in 2015 under the leadership of Indonesia, and notes with appreciation the various efforts deployed in this regard to produce concrete results.

9. The Group reiterates that in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. In this context, the Group urges nuclear-weapon states to withdraw all reservations and interpretative declarations to the Protocols of nuclear-weapon-free zones treaties.

10. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation, for the first time in history, of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014, which includes the commitment of all States of that region to further nuclear disarmament as a priority goal and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. Hopefully, this proclamation will be followed by other political proclamations as "Zones of Peace" in other regions of the world. The Group welcomes the Political Declaration of Quito, adopted at the Fourth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Quito, Ecuador, on 27 January 2016, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament conducive to general, total and verifiable disarmament. The Group also welcomes the Political Declaration of Punta Cana, adopted at the Fifth Summit of Latin American and Caribbean States held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, on 25 January 2017, which reaffirms, inter alia, the commitment of CELAC achieve a total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. CELAC reaffirms its commitment to the consolidation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace and highlights its character of first ever Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Group welcomes the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on 14 February 2017 in Mexico, in the framework of the 25th Session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL).

11. The Group reiterates its strong support for the early establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all nuclear weapons. To this end, the Group reaffirms the need for the expeditious establishment of such a zone in response to the resolution 487 (1981) and paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991) of the Security Council and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

12. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons express their disappointment and deep concern that three States Parties, including two States that bear special responsibility as NPT depositary and co-sponsors States of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons resolution on the Middle East, blocked consensus on the draft outcome document of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons including the process to establish a Middle East Zone free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction, as contained in the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. This could undermine efforts towards strengthening Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime as a whole. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear

Weapons reaffirm that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East continues to constitute the basis for the establishment of such a zone and that the 1995 resolution remains valid until fully implemented. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons also express their serious concern over the lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, and in accordance with paragraph 6 of this resolution, "Call upon all States party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, to extend their cooperation and to exert their utmost efforts with a view to ensuring the early establishment by regional parties of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction," and reaffirm that the co-sponsors of the resolution must take all the necessary measures to fully implement it without further delay. The States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons express their utmost concern that the persistent lack of implementation of the 1995 resolution, contrary to the decisions made at the relevant Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, erodes the credibility of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and disrupts the delicate balance among its three pillars, taking into account that the indefinite extension of the treaty is inextricably linked to the implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. In this context, the States Parties of the Group of 21 to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons reaffirm the urgency of Israel's accession to the Treaty without further delay and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

13. While the Group believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones are positive steps towards strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, it does not subscribe to the arguments that declarations that have been made by the nuclear weapon States are sufficient, or that security assurances should only be granted in the context of nuclear-weapon free zones. In addition, given their geographical limitations, security assurances guaranteed to States-members of nuclear-weapon-free zones cannot substitute for universal legally-binding security assurances.

14. The Group recalls that the demand for security assurances was raised by the non-nuclear-weapon States in the 1960s and it crystallized in 1968 during the concluding phase of the negotiations for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The response of the nuclear-weapon States, however, as reflected in resolutions 255 (1968) and 984 (1995) of the Security Council was incomplete, partial and conditional. The demand for assurances therefore persists.

15. The Group accepts that, while various approaches exist, efforts to conclude a universal and legally-binding instrument on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be vigorously pursued. The Group considers that the conclusion of such an instrument would be an important step towards achieving the objectives of arms control, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects.

16. The Group takes notes of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on Negative Security Assurances held in the CD from 18-20 June 2014 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978, on 27 August 2015 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2015 session contained in document CD/2021, and on 28-30 June 2017 under the Working Group on the Way Ahead established by decision CD/2090. The Group looks forward to substantive discussions on the issue of NSAs in Subsidiary Body 4 this year, pursuant to decisions CD/2119 and CD/2126.

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

Original: English

Note verbale dated 3 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS).

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

GE.18-13664(E)

1813664

Please recycle

Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)

1. The Group of 21 believes that space technology has indeed become an indispensable and integral part of our daily lives. Never before have information, communication, banking, economic transactions, navigation, and even political and strategic decision making been so dependent on space-based technologies, which are themselves witnessing rapid growth.

2. The Group reiterates that outer space and other celestial bodies are the common heritage of humankind and must be used, explored and utilized for the benefit and interest of all humankind in a spirit of cooperation. The Group reaffirms that the exploration and use of outer space and other celestial bodies shall be for peaceful purposes only and shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development.

3. The Group stresses that the growing use of outer space requires all states to take actions to ensure greater transparency, confidence building measures and better information. The Group believes that all States with major space capabilities have a special responsibility to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. All States should refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation.

4. The Group recognizes that the prevention of an arms race in outer space would avert a grave danger for international peace and security. The Group emphasizes the necessity of undertaking further measures with appropriate and effective verification provisions to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects.

5. The Group emphasizes the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and the paramount importance of strict compliance with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space. In this regard, the Group is deeply concerned over the increasing threat of weaponization of outer space including the negative implications of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic-missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space which have, inter alia, contributed to the further weakening of an international climate conducive to the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security.

6. The Group stresses that all states bear a responsibility to refrain from activities that could jeopardize the collective goal of preserving outer space free from weapons of mass destruction and all other forms of weaponization so as to ensure that its benefits are available to all.

7. The Group considers that the multilateral disarmament agreements provide mechanisms for States Parties to consult one another and cooperate in solving any problems which may arise in relation to the objective of, or in the application of, the provisions of the agreements, and that such consultations and cooperation may also be undertaken through appropriate international procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

8. The prevention of an arms race in outer space has assumed greater urgency because of legitimate concerns that existing legal instruments are inadequate to deter further militarization of outer space, or prevent its weaponization. The Group further reaffirms its recognition that the legal regime applicable to outer space does not in and of itself guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For that purpose, the Group stresses the need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness.

9. In this regard, the Group reaffirms that the Conference on Disarmament is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, which has the primary role in conducting substantive negotiations on priority issues of disarmament. The Group, therefore, believes that the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiations on matters related to the "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" without delay.

10. While welcoming the adoption of resolution 72/26 entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" by the UN General Assembly, the Group recalls that the resolution made the following observations with regard to the Conference on Disarmament:

(a) The Conference on Disarmament has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects; and

(b) The Conference on Disarmament should establish a working group under its agenda item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" as early as possible during its 2018 session.

11. The Group of 21 takes note of the completion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts and the adoption of a study on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures as requested by resolution 65/68 of the General Assembly of the United Nations on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", which was adopted by consensus at the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Group, while stressing the priority of negotiating legally binding instruments for reinforcing the international legal regime on outer space, recognizes that global and inclusive transparency and confidence building measures, reached at through broad international consultations, could be important complementary measures. The Group recognizes the value of TCBMs including a non-legally binding Code of Conduct in promoting trust among states. However, such voluntary measures cannot be a substitute for a legally binding treaty on PAROS.

12. The Group welcomes the updated draft treaty text submitted jointly by the Russian Federation and China on the "Prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space, the threat or use of force against outer space objects" (PPWT) to the Conference on Disarmament in June 2014. This initiative is a constructive contribution to the work of the Conference, and is a good basis for discussions toward adopting an international binding instrument.

13. The Group welcomes the adoption of resolution 72/27 titled "No first placement of weapons in outer space" by the UN General Assembly on 4 December 2017.

14. The Group also welcomes the adoption of resolution 72/250 titled "Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space" by the UN General Assembly on 24 December 2017, which urged the CD to immediately commence negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including, inter alia, on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space.

15. The Group takes notes of the substantive and interactive informal discussions on PAROS held in the CD from 11-13 June 2014 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2014 session contained in document CD/1978, on 13 and 20 August 2015 pursuant to the Schedule of Activities of the 2015 session contained in document CD/2021, and on 14-16 June 2017 under the Working Group on the Way Ahead established by decision CD/2090. The Group looks forward to substantive discussions on the issue of PAROS in Subsidiary Body 3 this year, pursuant to decisions CD/2119 and CD/2126.

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

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Note verbale dated 3 August 2018 from the Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament, and in its capacity as the Coordinator for the Group of 21

The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on Follow-up to the 2013 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament.

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

GE.18-13667(E)

1813667

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Follow-up to the 2013 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament

1. The strong support of the international community for taking urgent and effective measures to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons was amply demonstrated at High-level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament held on 26 September 2013, when Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers, and other high-level or senior government officials expressed their unambigious position and policies for nuclear disarmament, in response to the decision adopted in the General Assembly resolution 67/39.

2. Subsequent to this High Level Meeting, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 68/32, 69/58, 70/34, 71/71 and 72/251 titled "Follow-up to the 2013 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament". These resolutions called for the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

3. The resolutions also requested the Secretary General to seek the views of Members States with regard to achieving the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, in particular on the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, and to submit a report thereon to the General Assembly, and the Conference on Disarmament.

4. The General Assembly also decided to convene a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament no later than 2018 to review progress made in this regard.

5. The Group stresses the importance of the commemoration, of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which falls on 26 of September. In this regard, the Group expresses its appreciation to Member States, the United Nations system and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, academia, parliamentarians, the mass media and individuals that developed activities in promotion of this International Day, through all means of educational and public awareness-raising activities about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination, in order to mobilize international efforts towards achieving the common goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. The Group invites all stakeholders to continuously promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

6. The Group welcomes the formal proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as Zone of Peace, on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in La Habana, Cuba, on 28-29 January 2014. The 33 member countries of CELAC declare to promote nuclear disarmament as a priority goal as part of the progress towards general and complete disarmament, in order to promote the strengthening of trust among nations. CELAC once again reiterates its standing commitment to continue working for Latin America and the Caribbean remains and be strengthened as a Zone of Peace, thereby contributing to regional and international security.

7. The persistent existence of nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to humanity and all life on Earth, and the only defence against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear detonation is the total and irreversible legally binding elimination of nuclear weapons and the maintenance of a nuclear weapon free world.

8. Nuclear disarmament is the highest priority of the CD. The Group reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or

threat of use. The fulfilment of nuclear disarmament obligations and commitments would mutually reinforce non-proliferation. Nuclear disarmament has to be pursued in a comprehensive and non-discriminatory manner.

9. The G-21 is mindful of the solemn obligations of States parties, undertaken in article VI of the NPT, particularly to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament and calls for urgent compliance with the legal obligation of the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken in this field.

10. We acknowledge the significant contribution made by a number of countries towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament through the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones, as well as by voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons programmes or withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from their territories, and strongly supporting the speedy establishment of a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East.

11. We are deeply concerned by the persistent reluctance of nuclear weapons states to approach their treaty obligation as an urgent commitment to the total elimination of their nuclear weapons by providing pretexts unacceptable due to the urgency of making concrete actions to avert the adverse consequences of nuclear weapons.

12. In this connection, we recall the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice in its 1996 Advisory Opinion that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to conclusion the negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

13. It is the firm belief of the Group that the time has come to words into action. Accordingly, the Group of 21 takes this opportunity to call for the implementation of UNGA resolutions 68/32, 69/58, 70/34, 71/71 and 72/251. In this connection, the Group of 21 calls for the urgent commencement of negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the CD, in particular on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction.

14. The Group takes note of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on July 7th 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, pursuant to UNGA resolution 71/258 held in New York from 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017.

15. We therefore request the President to take into account in your on-going consultations, how to take forward the mandate given to the CD by the UN General Assembly on this important issue, and call upon Members of the Conference to support this important initiative.

Conference on Disarmament

17 August 2018

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The Permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations has the honour to submit herewith the G-21 Working paper on the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the Group of 21, the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam requests that the document be issued as an official Working paper of the Conference on Disarmament for the year 2018.

The permanent Mission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations Office, the World Trade Organization and other International Organizations at Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament the assurance of its highest consideration.

GE.18-13668(E)

1813668

Please recycle

The work of the Conference on Disarmament

1. The Group of 21 underscores the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and reiterates its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

2. The Group recalls that "seeking to advance the substantive work of the Conference in fulfilment of its mandate in accordance with SSOD I, the Conference decided to establish, in accordance with Paragraph 23 of its rules of procedure, subsidiary bodies on agenda items 1 (one) to 4 (four), and one on agenda items 5 (five), 6 (six) and 7 (seven), which could also consider emerging and other issues relevant to substantive work of the Conference."

3. In accordance with paragraph no. 2 of Decision CD/2119, "each subsidiary body will be chaired by a coordinator appointed by the Conference, under the guidance of the President on the basis of equitable geographic distribution". The Subsidiary Bodies will meet in accordance with the timetable annexed to the decision CD/2126.

4. The Decision CD/2119 also notes that the establishment of the subsidiary bodies is "Without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Conference and the responsibilities entrusted to the President under the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular rule 29 for drawing up the programme of work of the Conference".

5. The Group reiterates the urgency that the CD should adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive Program of Work on the basis of its agenda and dealing with, inter alia, the core issues, in accordance with the rules of procedures.

6. The Group recalls that in accordance with paragraph 29 of its rules of procedure "the provisional agenda and the programme of work shall be drawn up by the President of the Conference with the assistance of the Secretary-General and presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption".

7. In this regard, the G-21 encourages all Member States to contribute to the work of the subsidiary bodies and to exert every effort and to work in concert with the Presidency of the Conference to adopt a programme of work at an early date.

8. The Group highlights the importance by all Member States of the CD to strictly adhere to the Rules of Procedure and the Decisions adopted by the CD.

9. The Group of 21 further stresses the need to maintain a constructive atmosphere in the CD.